

For Immediate Release

Contact: Rebecca Wilson

rebecca.wilson@lapl.org

Council District 14

isabella.crespin@lacity.org

Councilmember Ysabel Jurado Celebrates Groundbreaking for Long-Awaited Benjamin Franklin Branch Library Renovation in Boyle Heights

LOS ANGELES (Nov. 8, 2025)—On Saturday, Councilmember Ysabel Jurado, in partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library, joined city leaders, local organizations, and community members in Boyle Heights to celebrate the groundbreaking for the long-awaited renovation of the Benjamin Franklin Branch Library.

After years of community advocacy, the groundbreaking marks a major milestone in restoring a beloved space that fosters learning, connection, and opportunity for Boyle Heights residents.

“This isn’t just a library, it’s the heart of Boyle Heights. Reopening the Benjamin Franklin Branch restores a space where our community learns, connects, and thrives,” said **Councilmember Ysabel Jurado**. “From day one, bringing this library back has been a top priority, and today we begin a new chapter full of hope, pride, and possibility.”

“This groundbreaking ceremony was a testament to our shared vision and belief in a brighter future for the communities we serve at the Benjamin Franklin Branch. We’ll continue working diligently with the Bureau of Engineering and Council District 14 to ensure the needs of the community are met,” said **John F. Szabo**, City Librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library. “I’m grateful for the Boyle Heights community’s support and look forward to seeing the modern upgrades and sustainable features that will make this library an even greater community resource.”

The event began with a groundbreaking ceremony led by Councilmember Jurado, joined by Jenny Chavez, Vice President of the Board of Public Works; Alfred Mata, Interim City Engineer; Mayra Valadez, President of the Board of Library Commissioners; John F. Szabo, City Librarian; Lupita Perez-Leyva, Senior Librarian at the Benjamin Franklin Branch Library; and Iciar Rivera, Founder of Friends of the Boyle Heights Libraries.

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“Los Angeles Public Library branches are the heart of the communities they serve, and Boyle Heights is no exception,” said **President Mayra Valadez**, Board of Library Commissioners. “We value community voices and appreciate the thoughtful input from local leaders and residents whose insights have helped move this project forward and strengthen our service to the public.”

“The Benjamin Franklin Branch is more than just the library where I’ve worked; it’s where I spent my childhood and fostered my passion for reading, learning, and community,” said **Lupita Perez-Leyva**, Senior Librarian of the Benjamin Franklin Branch. “I’m honored to help lead the branch into a new chapter that inspires learning and connection for years to come.”

Following the ceremony, attendees enjoyed a community resource fair presented by local organizations such as Visión y Compromiso, El Centro de Ayuda, Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory, and Libros Schmibros, as well as a historic photo gallery curated by Boyle Heights Community Partners.

Families gathered for storytime with Maria Valenzuela, daughter of Dodgers legend Fernando Valenzuela, who read a new bilingual children’s book about her father. The celebration also featured Boyle Heights history talks and hands-on workshops with the LAPL Street Fleet, both in English and Spanish.

The Benjamin Franklin Branch Library closed to the public in 2020 during the pandemic and has remained closed after it was determined that major renovations were needed. One of Councilmember Jurado’s first actions in office was to jumpstart this long-stalled project, underscoring her commitment to delivering for Boyle Heights from day one.

The renovation project will modernize the existing historic structure while improving accessibility, safety, and community amenities. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2027.

[CLICK HERE](#) for photos.

About Los Angeles Public Library

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, physical collection of more than six million items, digital content and state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org, and thousands of public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

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